

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A reinforced panel, comprising:

a face sheet having an interior side and an exterior side;

~~a plurality of integral and intersecting ribs having distal ends and projecting from the interior side of the face sheet, the ribs intersecting to form contiguous cells spaced apart along length and width directions of the reinforced panel, the ribs and the face sheet comprising a one-piece molded fibrous panel such that the ribs are integral with the face sheet, the ribs having distal ends, the ribs panel defining at least one channel extending across a plurality of contiguous cells; and~~

an elongate reinforcing member positioned in the at least one channel and secured thereto for increasing bending resistance of the reinforced panel.

2. (Original) A panel according to Claim 1, wherein the reinforcing member has a cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of polygonal, circular, oval, and elliptical.

3. (Original) A panel according to Claim 1, wherein the reinforcing member has a cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of “T” shaped, “I” shaped, “V” shaped, “|” shaped, and “L” shaped.

4. (Original) A panel according to Claim 3, wherein the reinforcing member has a top end that is flush with the distal ends of the ribs.

5. (Original) A panel according to Claim 1, wherein the reinforcing member is secured to the channel by one of the group consisting of dry bond lamination, adhesive, snap-fit, and frictional fit.

6. (Original) A panel according to Claim 1, wherein at least one of the contiguous cells has a cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of round, elliptical, oval, and polygonal.

7. (Original) A panel according to Claim 1, wherein at least the face sheet, reinforcing member, and ribs are formed from papermaking fibers.

8. (Original) A panel according to Claim 1, further comprising a planar sheet attached at least to the distal ends of the intersecting ribs.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) A reinforced panel, comprising:

a first face sheet having an interior side and an exterior side;

a plurality of first ~~integral and intersecting~~ ribs ~~having distal ends and~~ projecting from the interior side of the first face sheet, the first ribs intersecting to form contiguous cells spaced apart along length and width directions of the reinforced panel, the first ribs and the first face sheet comprising a one-piece molded fibrous first panel such that the first ribs are integral with the first face sheet, the first ribs having distal ends;

a second face sheet having an interior side and an exterior side;

a plurality of second ~~integral and intersecting~~ ribs ~~having distal ends and~~ projecting from the interior side of the second face sheet, the second ribs intersecting to form contiguous cells spaced apart along length and width directions of the reinforced panel, the second ribs and the second face sheet comprising a one-piece molded fibrous second panel such that the second ribs are integral with the second face sheet, the second ribs having distal ends, at least one of the first and second ribs panels defining at least one channel extending across a plurality of contiguous cells;

the first and second panels being positioned in overlying relation and joined together to form the reinforced panel; and

at least one elongate reinforcing member positioned in the at least one channel and secured thereto for increasing bending resistance of the reinforced panel.

11. (Original) A panel according to Claim 10, wherein the at least one reinforcing member has a cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of polygonal, circular, oval, and elliptical.

12. (Original) A panel according to Claim 10, wherein the at least one reinforcing member has a cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of "T" shaped, "I" shaped, "V" shaped, " | " shaped, and "L" shaped.

13. (Original) A panel according to Claim 12, wherein the first ribs panel defines a first channel and the second ribs panel defines a second channel, and wherein the at least one reinforcing member includes a first reinforcing member and a second reinforcing member, the first reinforcing member being ~~is~~ positioned at least partially in the first channel, and the second reinforcing member being positioned at least partially in the second channel.

14. (Original) A panel according to Claim 13, wherein the first reinforcing member has an end that is flush with the distal ends of the first ribs, and wherein the second reinforcing member has an end that is flush with the distal ends of the second ribs.

15. (Original) A panel according to Claim 10, wherein the at least one reinforcing member is secured to the channel by one of the group consisting of dry bond lamination, adhesive, snap-fit, and frictional fit.

16. (Original) A panel according to Claim 10, wherein at least one of the first ribs and second ribs forms at least one contiguous cell having a cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of round, elliptical, oval, and polygonal.

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17. (Original) A panel according to Claim 10, wherein at least one of the face sheets and at least one of the ribs are formed from paperboard material.

18. (Original) A panel according to Claim 10, further comprising a planar sheet attached at least to the distal ends of the intersecting ribs.

19. (Currently Amended) A panel according to Claim 10 13, wherein at least one of the first and second reinforcing members is made from at least one of the materials selected from the group consisting of paperboard, wood, metal, and plastic.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) A method of forming a reinforced panel, comprising:

forming a first face sheet having a plurality of integral ribs extending therefrom, the ribs having distal ends and forming intersecting to form contiguous cells spaced apart along length and width directions of the reinforced panel, the ribs and the first face sheet comprising a one-piece molded fibrous first panel such that the ribs are integral with the first face sheet;

forming a first channel in the first-face sheet panel that extends across a plurality of contiguous cells; and

securing an elongate first reinforcing member in the first channel for increasing the bending resistance of the reinforced panel.

22. (Original) A method according to Claim 21, wherein the channel forming step and the face sheet forming step occur concurrently.

23. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 21, wherein the channel forming step includes cutting the first-face sheet panel to define the first channel.

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24. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 21, wherein the channel forming step includes molding the first ~~face sheet panel~~ to define the first channel.

25. (Original) A method according to Claim 21, wherein the securing step includes securing the first reinforcing member in the first channel by one of the group consisting of dry bond laminating, adhering with an adhesive, snapping in place, and pressing into a frictional fit.

26. (Original) A method according to Claim 21, wherein the securing step includes securing the first reinforcing member in the first channel whereby a portion of the first reinforcing member extends beyond the distal ends of the integral ribs.

27. (Original) A method according to Claim 21, wherein the securing step includes securing the first reinforcing member in the first channel whereby the first reinforcing member is flush with the distal ends of the integral ribs.

28. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 21, further comprising:
forming a second face sheet having a plurality of ~~integral~~ ribs extending therefrom, the ribs having distal ends and ~~forming intersecting to form~~ contiguous cells, ~~the ribs and the second face sheet comprising a one-piece molded fibrous second panel such that the ribs are integral with the second face sheet;~~

forming a second channel in the ~~second face sheet panel~~ that extends across a plurality of contiguous cells;

securing at least one of the first reinforcing member and a second reinforcing member in the second channel; and

attaching the first ~~face sheet panel~~ to the second ~~face sheet panel~~ to form the reinforced panel.

29. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 28, wherein the attaching step includes aligning and securing the distal ends of the ribs of the first ~~face sheet panel~~ and the

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distal ends of the ribs of the second face sheet panel to define at least one complete contiguous cell therebetween.

30. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 28, wherein securing at least one of the first and second reinforcing members in the second channel includes securing ~~a~~ the second reinforcing member in the second channel, and wherein the attaching step includes positioning the first and reinforcing members against one another.

31. (Original) A method according to Claim 28, wherein securing at least one of the first and second reinforcing members in the second channel includes securing the first reinforcing member in the second channel.

32-36. (Canceled)

37. (New) A reinforced molded fibrous panel, comprising:

a molded fibrous face sheet having opposite generally planar surfaces and a plurality of fibrous ribs molded integrally with the face sheet and projecting from one of the generally planar surfaces thereof, the ribs intersecting one another to form a plurality of cells each extending in a thickness direction of the panel and spaced apart along length and width directions of the panel;

an elongate channel formed in the panel, the channel extending along a direction perpendicular to the thickness direction and spanning a plurality of contiguous ones of the cells; and

an elongate reinforcing member secured in the channel.

38. (New) The reinforced molded fibrous panel of claim 37, wherein the reinforcing member extends across an entire width of the panel.